Isantimangalam and the continuance of the system of grants for selected bulls are some of the steps taken for the improvement of local cattle.

17. The number of fish-curing yards rose from 2 in 1096 to 7 in 1098, and since then another fish-curing yard has been opened at Nindakara, while a further one will soon be established at Cape Comorin. The quantity of fish cured has risen from 18,376 maunds in 1096 to 53,463 maunds in 1098. Experiments on fish and fruit canning are being continued at the laboratory attached to the Director's office and the fish and fruit canned at the laboratory have been sent to the British Empire Exhibition.

18. Mr. K. Parameswaran Pillai of the Agricultural Department has, on his return from study leave from Great Britain, been appointed as the Assistant Director of Agriculture, and he is expected to strengthen the hands of the Director with his long experience of the department and the new qualifications he has acquired. The Mycologist, who was sent on study leave to secure additional qualifications in his work by further study in European Universities, has not returned, and mycological work has consequently suffered; but an Economic Botanist has been temporarily added to the *cadre* of the superior staff of the department and he is conducting research work in the evolution of better strains of staple grains.

19. The expenditure on the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, which stood at Rs. 1,42,134 in 1095, has risen to Rs. 1,95,564 in 1098, the allotment in the budget for 1099 being Rs. 2,11,900. The Apicultural branch of the Department of Industries has been recently transferred to this department.

20. Irrigation and Drainage. Realising that the attention bestowed on minor irrigation works in the past was far from adequate, an appreciable advance was made in that direction in 1098, the expenditure rising to Rs. 70,685 from Rs. 32,564 in the previous year. The budget grant under this head in 1099 is Rs. 1,14,100 and several irrigation tanks in the Kalkulam, Vilavankod and Neyyattinkara taluks have already been taken up for restoration. The restoration of the Marutur channel in Neyyattinkara, the Tettiyar in Trivandrum, and the flood-banks of the Kallada river in Quilon also deserve mention in this connection. With a view to secure more rapid progress under this head, a small special staff has been appointed for the investigation and execution of minor irrigation works in the Trivandrum Division. The committee appointed to examine the condition of minor irrigation works in the Trivandrum taluk has not yet submitted its report. The constitution of irrigation boards for the construction of bunds on, and the pumping out of water from, *punja* lands in Kuttanad is pending the results of a conference with the interested landholders, which has just been held. The result of a preliminary investigation into the feasibility of utilising the water of the Sastankotta lake for irrigation is not encouraging; but the Chief Engineer has promised to make a further scrutiny of the scheme. The Cochin Government have, within the last few days, given a qualified consent to the execution of the Adirapalli scheme, but the conditions specified require further examination.

21. Forest. The administration of this important department on economic and beneficial lines is a matter of the utmost concern to the Government as well as to the people, but the difficulties of the task, by no means inconsiderable, have been accentuated by the coupe sale system introduced at the instance of the penultimate Conservator, the excessive working down of timber permitted by the late Conservator, and the prevailing slump in the timber market. The combined result has been the relinquishment of valuable timber for nominal prices, the deterioration in depôts of timber which should otherwise have fetched good prices, and a great fall in the revenue of the department. It is a matter of vital necessity to the Forest Department not only to find better markets for the products now in demand, but also to create markets for those that have not hitherto been in requisition. With a view to help the department in these directions, Government contemplate bringing it into direct touch with important centres of consumption like London and Bombay. Dr. N. Kunjan Pillai, the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries, who is now in England in connection with the British Empire Exhibition, has been commissioned to explore this possibility in regard to London, while Mr. K. S. Narayana Aiyangar, who has taken up the work of forest utilisation since his relief from the Forest College,

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is working on similar lines in respect of Bombay and other Indian centres. The department realises that one of its main drawbacks is the difficulty of delivering timber and other products at the sale depôts and commercial centres at the rates and in the bulk that would pay merchants to transact business with it; and it also realises that the steady expansion and improvement of communications in forest areas will alone remove this defect. The efforts so far made by the department in this direction have, however, been halting, due apparently to the difficulty to decide whether the expenditure on such improvements is likely to be remunerative. There are two classes of communications which deserve attention, *viz.*, land-routes and water-ways; and there seems little doubt that the money spent in the improvement of water-ways will, in no case, be money spent in vain. Vacillation should be avoided and a definite programme of improvements to communications should be drawn up with courage and promptitude; and Government trust that the Conservator will have some definite proposals to place before them in this respect when the time for the preparation of the next budget comes round.

22. Sylvicultural work has recently been making noteworthy progress; and as a result of the introduction of the *taungya* system it has been found possible during the last triennium to plant on an average 564 acres with teak annually at a cost of Rs. 2 per acre, against 208 acres per annum in the previous triennium at a cost of Rs. 18 per acre. The scheme for the utilisation, for the manufacture of paper pulp, of the large quantities of reeds available in North Travancore, brought to notice by Mr. Dhanukoti Pillai as Forest Utilisation Officer, had to be abandoned for want of cheap power; but it has enabled the Government to sanction the establishment of a private match factory there, which is expected to bring in an annual minimum revenue of Br. Rs. 10,000 for the first ten years, with prospects of further increase on the expiry of that period. It will be noted that, to this factory, the right to the collection and removal of reeds on an area of only 8,000 acres of our North Travancore forests has been granted, and it need hardly be stated that the revenue hitherto derived by the Government from this small area has been inappreciable. Negotiations leading to a similar revenue from another area of reeds in Central Travancore, required for the manufacture of paper in the Punalur Paper Mills, are in progress. No headway has apparently been made in the expansion of sandalwood cultivation in Devicolam. This matter calls for the urgent attention of the Conservator.

23. The efficiency of the executive staff of the department has been improved by the training recently given to a large number of Rangers and Deputy Rangers in the Forest College at Quilon, and the department now has 68 per cent. of its executive and 27 per cent. of its protective staff satisfactorily trained for forest work. The College was closed at the commencement of the current year since there was no present necessity for its continuance. A school, however, was opened at Konni in Kumbham 1099 to give a course of training to Forest Guards for a period of six months.

24. Orders have just been issued by the Government on the report submitted by the Free Pass Rules Committee on the important question of smoothening the working of the rules for the free transport of private timber. Under the revised rules now sanctioned, no pass is required for the removal of as many as seventeen species of timber ordinarily growing in the plains on private lands, or of minor forest produce other than *incha*, honey, wax, dammer, *patirippu*, and *chiyakkai*. It is unnecessary for the applicant to secure a certificate or an attested copy of the sketch of the land, it being the duty of the Range Officer to get the required information himself from the Proverthikar within seven days of the receipt of application. The procedure from start to finish has been appreciably simplified, and in no case can the issue of a pass be now delayed for more than two months. It is hoped that the new rules will have the effect of removing a long-standing grievance. The question of the grant of full ownership in royal trees on registered lands and that of simplifying the procedure regulating the removal of such trees and the payment of *kudivila* therefor have been referred to the same committee and its report is awaited.

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